FOREWORD BY AUDUBON COMMISSION

[Right: Scenic views at Audubon Park. Image courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute.]
Acknowledgements

Audubon Commission acknowledges the effort and skill of the Audubon Nature Institute staff and the Planning Team in developing the Audubon Park Master Plan.

The following individuals deserve special recognition:

Audubon Nature Institute
- Ron Forman  President/CEO
- Laurie Conkerton  Executive VP/CAO
- Kyle Burks  VP Managing Director, Park and Zoo
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Urban Interactive Studio
- Chris Haller  CEO
- Fritz Clauson  Project Manager

Audubon Commission further acknowledges the continued and past public involvement in community meetings as well as the community’s enthusiastic online presence and participation. This input from community stakeholders has provided crucial data to support the need for the continued balance of uses in Audubon Park.

[Right: Joggers at Audubon Park. Image courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute.]
Executive Summary

In 2003, Audubon Commission undertook to develop a Master Plan for Audubon Park, a process interrupted by the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina. In 2018, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple was invited to assemble a team to collaborate with Audubon Nature Institute in updating and completing the plan. From the outset, Audubon Commission set a goal of integrating the planning process with the community, including stakeholders ranging from the surrounding neighborhoods to regional visitors. Through a series of open, townhall workshops, it became clear that equity of public space and finding a balance among all users of the Park would be a focal point in the outcome.

A search for balance is inherent in the DNA of Audubon Park, tracing back to 19th century social debates about passive and active recreation and land use. A democratic approach to land allocation in Audubon Park was one of John Charles Olmsted’s goals, building on the work of his predecessors in creating urban parks. When Olmsted, then later the Olmsted Brothers firm, was commissioned to envision Audubon Park, that goal was implemented by providing a mix of recreational and more pastoral uses. This thread of balance has woven through Audubon Park’s design and history, creating a tapestry of landscape that provides visitors with a connection to nature as a respite from the pressures of the urban environment.

Today, the challenges facing Audubon Park relate to preserving and protecting existing features and maintaining a balanced variety of activities for generations of future users. Some of these challenges include:

- Protection of trees and open green space
- Drainage throughout the Park
- Parking, traffic, and safety concerns
- Environmental stewardship
- Preservation of historic features of the Park

It is through the understanding of these challenges that the Master Plan advances a set of proposals and recommendations to support Audubon Commission’s objectives to preserve the current equilibrium among passive and active public uses and to maintain and enhance the environment of Audubon Park as it currently exists.

[Right: Historic Oak Tree at Audubon Park. Image courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute.]
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AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN

BACKGROUND

1.0
1.1 Historical Information

Audubon Park as we know it today, was envisioned by John Charles Olmsted, nephew and adopted son of Frederick Law Olmsted. Frederick Law Olmsted was well known in his lifetime for designing urban parks throughout the country, including Central Park in New York City. In 1897, John Charles Olmsted was commissioned to plan Audubon Park in the Victorian manner championed by his uncle before him. During the progression of the design, however, Olmsted found himself torn between two battling ideologies: a classically Victorian approach focused on vast open spaces for leisurely activities versus an emerging, progressive approach to health and wellness through the implementation of organized sports and recreation. Striving for a balance between the two has been a part of Audubon Park’s narrative from the beginning.

The drawing pictured is a proposed plan by John C. Olmsted from 1905. Few elements in the original plan were constructed and many modifications were made to the plan before construction was completed decades later due to the lack of reliable funding sources for park development.

Long before Olmsted was commissioned to design the Park, the land parcel existed as a contiguous plot that stretched from the Mississippi River to where Fontainebleau Drive is today. The area that encompasses Audubon Park was inhabited by Native Americans until Etienne de Bore, New Orleans’ first Mayor, founded the nation’s first commercial sugar plantation in the 1790s. The land was used during the American Civil War by the Confederate and Union Armies as a camp and hospital, respectively, and later became a staging area for the 9th Calvary, later called “Buffalo Soldiers”.

The City of New Orleans annexed the large parcel into its corporate limits in 1870 and purchased the property for civic use in 1871. Soon after, preparations began to host the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in 1884 - Louisiana’s first World’s Fair. This laid the foundation for an urban park. To distinguish this park from New Orleans’ City Park, it was named Upper City Park. The name of the park was changed in 1886 to Audubon Park honoring the artist and naturalist John James Audubon, known for painting “Birds of America” during his travels in Louisiana.
1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Historical Information
John Charles Olmsted’s original plan for the Park included Oak Alley, St Charles Avenue entrance and fountain, Newman Bandstand, a ‘lawn for little children’, a shelter where the Walnut Street Playground is today, and the large lagoon that cradles the edge of the Golf Course. During the course of construction, Olmsted became frustrated with the portioned implementation of his plans due to lack of funding from the City and the State, limited public interest in funding the Park, and conflicting ideals for public space. In 1898, Audubon Park Association leased land to create a Golf Course in the Park and, in 1905, that course expanded to roughly the size and location that is used today. This golf course was later incorporated into Olmsted’s plan for the Park.

The Audubon Commission was established by State Act in 1914 to maintain and develop Audubon Park. A flight cage and greenhouse were added to the Park in 1916 replacing the Horticultural Hall that had been previously damaged beyond repair in a 1915 hurricane. The flight cage’s popularity launched the community’s call for a full-scale zoo. Later in 1918, Olmsted’s Lagoon was completed and became a popular swimming hole in the section closest to Magazine Street. John C. Olmsted died in 1920, never seeing completion of the Park’s major elements in the mid-1930s.

The president of the Audubon Commission in 1920, Dr. W. Scheppeggrell, continued development of the Park with Frederick Law Olmsted Jr and subsequent changes to the Park were guided by the original John C. Olmsted design. Together, Olmsted Jr. and Dr. Scheppeggrell incorporated new progressive interests into the design of the Park. Together, they added areas for swimming, tennis, baseball, and boating and began constructing Audubon Zoo in 1924 on land previously used as a sugar experimentation station extending from Magazine Street to what is now the Odenheimer Sea Lion Pool.

In 1932, Audubon Commission recognized the need to preserve the Mississippi River batture beyond Audubon Park levee as public space to prevent wharves or other structures from being built, which would obstruct riverfront views. The Commission worked with the Levee Board and Dock Board to acquire this area for park purposes. Throughout the Great Depression, Works Progress Administration (WPA) laborers worked to clean and fill the batture, offering a glimpse of what the space could be. The Olmsted firm drafted a preliminary sketch of roadways over the railroad tracks. Development of the batture was delayed until additional WPA funding was approved in September 1935. Initial improvements included restroom facilities and roadways, but little work was done over the next two decades. The 1930s also saw construction of a new zoo, thanks to a generous bequest from Dixie Beer co-founder Valentine Merz along with matching Works Progress Administration funds. Opening in 1938, the Zoo thrived until the 1960s, when continued lack of city support contributed to its deterioration.

The 1960s were noteworthy in Audubon Park’s development because Audubon Commission led the fight with neighbors and the City of New Orleans against expansion of the Public Avenue Wharf along the batture. The Commission prevailed in a 1963 court case and developed the batture as public space. After serving as a refuse dump following Hurricane Betsy, the batture became a site for riverfront picnics, sports, and sunsets. In 1968, the Bureau of Governmental Research conducted a study on best practices in modern zoo management which recommended creation of public/private partnership to develop and operate the Zoo. The City of New Orleans approved the study’s recommendations and a collaborative effort among Audubon Commission, Audubon Zoological Society, and Friends of the Zoo led to voter approval of a 50-year tax millage to help support improvements at Audubon Zoo. This millage was granted in 1972. In 1977, The Audubon Zoological Society and Friends of the Zoo merged to form a single non-profit organization that would enter into an agreement with Audubon Commission to operate and develop Audubon Park and Zoo. The combined Friends of the Zoo organization’s name was changed to Audubon Institute in 2001, reflecting a broader mission to share the wonders of nature in new ways. Although Audubon Commission and Audubon Nature Institute have expanded operations over the past 50 years, their roots are inextricably linked to Audubon Park and their joint commitment to providing a vital urban resource for recreation and reflection. The recently completed Olmsted Renewed fundraising campaign generated more than $10 million in private funding for park improvements and endowments, which park users enjoy today.

Finding a balance of uses in Audubon Park has been a challenge from its inception through design and implementation of John Charles Olmsted’s plan. Limited funding availability delayed the development of Audubon Park, causing the project schedule to extend over many years and compelling the designers to address changing ideals for the Park’s open spaces.

Fundamentally, Audubon Park provides a retreat from the urban condition into nature, if only for a moment, to refresh one’s soul and enjoy one’s friends and family. The balance among the variety of pursuits inherent in human nature is what the Master Plan endeavors to support and promote.
1.2 Summary of Previous Planning

Audubon Park has undergone a series of planning exercises since the land was purchased by the City of New Orleans in 1871. John Charles Olmsted was hired to design a plan for the Park in 1897 and submitted plans for consideration to Audubon Commission in 1905 and 1916. Implementation of Olmsted’s designs spanned many years and were subject to alterations during that period. After John C. Olmsted’s death in 1920, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. continued work on the Park implementing as much of the original design guidelines as possible while understanding the change in interest from the public and the limited funding for Audubon Park’s development. A majority of the work was finally completed in the mid-1930s.

In the 1970s and into the mid-1980s, Audubon Park underwent several significant operational changes. In 1983, Audubon Commission approved the permanent removal of cars from the upper portion of the Park, making way for the immensely popular walking and jogging path in what is now its current location. The golf course changed from private to public operations, falling under Audubon Commission’s purview in 1983. In the early 1980s, a new planning vision for the Riverview area emerged under the leadership of local architects Cashio Cochran. Though much of this plan was not implemented, the Aquarium Zoo-cruise which travelled between Audubon Aquarium and Zoo was opened and remained popular for many years until the early 2000s. A riverside promenade, shelters and lighting were installed, along with baseball and soccer fields. More recently, a planning process conducted between 2002 and 2004 reached 90% status, providing a departure point for this planning effort.
1.2 Summary of Previous Planning

The following is an excerpt of the 2004 Audubon Park 90% Master Plan Overview:

In developing the Audubon Park Master Plan, the highest priority of the Audubon Commission is to continue its stewardship of the unique character of Audubon Park that has been a source of enjoyment for generations of New Orleanians. The site plan contained in Section A, therefore, reflects no major changes to land uses in Audubon Park. However, within this existing framework of uses, the Audubon Commission will continue to improve the beauty of the Park, ensure its historical integrity and respond to the evolving recreational needs of the entire New Orleans community.

The 90% Master Plan is prepared as a document to guide the development of specific programs and facilities in Audubon Park for the next twenty years. The plan is divided into five major sections. Section A is a site plan overview of Audubon Park, providing an overall perspective of land uses in the Park. As can be seen in this site plan, there are no significant changes in land use or traffic patterns included in this master plan. Sections B, C and D include detailed discussions of the three major areas of Audubon Park: St. Charles to Magazine Street; Magazine Street to the railroad tracks; and the railroad tracks to the river. These three sections provide additional detail and discussion of the various land uses contained in the overall site plan and provide a description of the physical characteristics and the visitor experiences in each of these different areas of Audubon Park. The final section, Section E, contains an appendix of more detailed information regarding programs or physical improvements that are intended to be implemented under the Master Plan.

The 90% Master Plan represents a direction for Audubon Park which the Audubon Commission believes is consistent with Audubon Park’s history, the changing recreational needs of the entire New Orleans community and the expressed desires of Audubon Park’s users and neighbors. Under the leadership of the Audubon Commission, this Master Plan will ensure that Audubon Park will continue to be a treasured asset for all New Orleanians far into the future.
1.3 Organizing Principles

The initial step in the planning process was to understand and codify a set of overarching goals and objectives to guide the Planning Team in the development of the Master Plan. A common thread throughout the Master Plan document involves investigation of how the Park can be maintained and enhanced in a way that supports the mission of Audubon Commission and Audubon Nature Institute.

Audubon Commission and the Planning Team have identified the following organizing principles for the Audubon Park Master Plan:

**Preservation and Heritage**
- Sustain and enhance Audubon Park as a public amenity

**Education and Culture**
- Foster opportunities for education and community outreach
- Celebrate the cultural heritage of the Park

**Access / Infrastructure**
- Investigate improvements to circulation / access
- Recommend strategies for water management

**Recreation / Entertainment / Wellness**
- Evaluate use of recreational open space
- Maintain and enhance exercise and athletic facilities

**Environmental Stewardship**
- Conserve and enrich the landscape and environment
- Evaluate best horticultural practices for application
- Preserve and augment tree canopy

Audubon Commission recognizes the importance of these principles as a means of organizing thoughts and discussions related to the Audubon Park Master Plan. These principles provide an outline for future work and a methodology of thinking that strives to maintain the Park’s legacy of balance and harmony of uses to benefit the community and the environment.
1.4 Planning Process

Building on the previous Master Plan created in 2002-2004, four primary objectives were:

- Investigate the 2004 Plan and evaluate its underlying premises for applicability in the present context
- Revise the Site Plan Map to document current conditions and projects completed in the previous fourteen years
- Evaluate land use allocation and circulation patterns and recommend improvements
- Generate modified criteria and planning principles to guide the future evolution and operation of the Park

The methodology for developing the 2018 Master Plan was shaped largely by the process of community engagement and public input. Community engagement elements included:

- Website with interactive maps
- Web-based public comment (ongoing)
- Online survey (January – April, 2018)
- On-site intercept survey (March 2 – March 25, 2018)
- Monthly Town Hall community meetings (Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 7, May 16)
- Mail-in/drop-off location for written comments (ongoing)

The Planning Team facilitated a series of internal workshops involving key members of Audubon Nature Institute staff including representatives from:

- Administration
- Operations
- Facilities
- Security
- Development
- Education
- Horticulture
- Audubon Zoo
- Golf Course
- Tennis Courts

Additional input was provided by representatives from organizational stakeholders:

- Audubon Tennis Club
- Bike Easy NOLA
- Carrollton Boosters
- National Association for Olmsted Parks

The intent of the planning process is to be transparent and inclusive. The Park has a wide and diverse set of constituencies. Within the constraints of time and resources, Audubon Commission and the Planning Team have listened to any and all voices during the process and have configured a Plan that strives to find a balance among all concerned stakeholders.

[Images and scans from Master Plan Community Meetings. All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
1.4 Projects Completed 2004 - 2017

The map above shows projects completed throughout Audubon Park between 2004 and 2017. All projects indicated were funded with private donations. Many of these projects were funded through the Olmsted Renewed fundraising initiative.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park projects completed between 2004-2017 throughout the Park. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN
DATA & ANALYSIS

2.0
2.1 Summary of Findings

Community members and visitors to Audubon Park were offered multiple means of communication with the planners and the Audubon Nature Institute during the planning process. Community members could engage through:

- Online Survey
- On-site Intercept Survey
- Online Public Comments (General Comments, What You Love about Audubon Park, and Comments about Shelter 13)
- Public Comments at Community Meetings
- Favorite Places mapping and Comment

In several instances, community members and frequent visitors to Audubon Park sent comments and suggestions to the planners and Audubon Nature Institute via email or in-person. All of these comments were reviewed and considered during the planning process and provided helpful, detailed feedback from the community about specific issues, concerns, and desires for Audubon Park.

Throughout the process, community members engaged the most with the public forum areas of the website, the surveys (both in-person and online), and community meeting participation.

Overall, comments were generally optimistic that Audubon Park will continue for years to come to enrich the lives of many as it does today.
2.2 Survey Results

Through the review of over 1,000 public comments online, 910 online surveys, and 506 in-person surveys, the Master Plan has gathered ample amounts of information indicating the concerns and priorities are important to community members and visitors who frequent Audubon Park. As a part of the online surveys, respondents were asked to rank priorities for improvements in the Park and the top answers are as follows (see pie chart on right):

- Improve drainage
- Increase / improve lighting (Top priority at Riverview)
- Improve cycling / pedestrian access across Magazine Street
- Undertake more aggressive tree preservation program
- Installation of dedicated walking / jogging / cycling paths (at Riverview)

The in-person surveys’ top priorities for allocation of Park funds are similar:

- Improve drainage in various areas of the Park
- Improve or increase lighting
- Install more security phones / cameras
- Improving infrastructure (Riverview)
- Improve trees and landscaping (Riverview)

These concerns and areas of priority have been echoed at each public community meeting. Many participants in the community meeting break-out sessions had expressed concerns over drainage, lighting, security, and pedestrian safety in various areas of the Park. These participatory survey results have been vital to understanding the community’s needs and priorities for Audubon Park.
2.3 Comments from Project Website

Early in the master planning process, the Planning Team recommended the incorporation of an interactive website component accessible by community members and visitors interested in participating in the planning process. Urban Interactive Studio was contracted as the digital communications consultant based on prior experience with similar projects.

The website was presented to the public at the first Audubon Master Plan community meeting on February 6, 2018. After that time, the public was able to engage in technological means of gathering input. The public was able to take surveys about the Park, provide general comments, and map their favorite locations. After a brief period, more specific questions were introduced on the website for public engagement including ideas about Shelter 13 located near Magazine Street. All community meetings were recorded and uploaded on the master plan website in addition to important updates and other information.

Community comments left on the website in the ‘General Comments’ section outlined concerns and desires for the Park. These comments included discussion about:

- Drainage throughout the Park
- Protection of trees and open green space
- Parking and traffic issues and concerns
- Environmental stewardship
- Lighting throughout the Park

[Images taken from the Master Plan website - audubonmasterplan.org. Website information courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute. Image of the Riverview courtesy of Michael Mantese.]
2.4 Community Outreach

Community engagement and outreach has been an important part of the planning process. As operators of the Park, Audubon Nature Institute interfaces with the greater New Orleans community through various means and considers community input an integral part of what makes Audubon Park successful.

In 2005, Audubon Nature Institute launched a special community relations program designed specifically to engage minority/underserved residents in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Since then, over 2.3 million minority/underserved visitors of all ages have experienced the wonders of nature through Audubon’s family of parks and museums.

Through special partnerships with local businesses, schools, churches, health organizations and social service organizations, African American, Hispanic American and Asian American families are able to make life long connections to nature and enjoy family entertainment they would not otherwise be able to access.

Whether it be discounted field trips for underprivileged schools, a health information booth at Soul Fest, a business expo for local minority owned businesses, a UNCF Walk for Education, or a citywide Easter Egg hunt, Audubon Nature Institute remains committed to the minority/underserved populations in our community.

Using the AudubonParkMasterPlan.org website, the planning process has employed means of communicating digitally with the community and region, remaining transparent and providing engagement opportunities for those interested in giving input. Visitors to the Park, neighbors, New Orleans residents, and residents of the region all visit Audubon Park frequently, and it is those individuals that have made the Park successful through their continued care, use and support. It is with the support of the community that continued success for Audubon Park can be achieved.

[Images from the Audubon Master Plan community meetings. Images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
3.0

AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN

FOCUS AREAS
3.1 District 1: St Charles/Exposition/Walnut Frontage

The area titled District 1 at Audubon Park largely follows the walking/jogging/biking path that surrounds the lagoon and Audubon Golf Course. Included in this area is the ceremonial “front door” to the Park at St. Charles Avenue. Major landmark features in this area include:

- Walking / Jogging Path (1.8 miles, paved)
- Five Exercise Stations along the path
- Audubon Golf Course
- Hurst Bridge
- Gumbel Fountain at St Charles Avenue
- Ogden Entry Pavilion along St Charles Avenue
- Bird Island
- Shelters 11 & 12 and Playgrounds

Every day at 5 am, early rising joggers can be seen on the path pounding pavement and exercising at the stations along the path. In the afternoon sun on any warm day, children feed birds from the lagoon’s edge or climb on newly refreshed playgrounds. Most evenings, couples walk leisurely along the path, sometimes with dog in tow, as golfers get in one last swing before sunset. District 1 is an area of the Park that is used frequently by those wishing to see the Park preserved and maintained in its existing state so that they can jog, exercise, feed birds, golf, and stroll for many years to come.

Community members and residents living near Exposition, Walnut, and St. Charles Avenue were present and vocal during the Master Plan community meetings, and shared their opinions about District 1. Discussions over various issues and concerns ranged from:

- Lighting at the Jogging Path
- Light pollution at various points in the Park
- Safety concerns near intersections of vehicles and pedestrians
- Access and wayfinding near the entrance of the Park
- Drainage along Walnut and Exposition
- Lagoon Health and Management; Erosion

(Clockwise from Top: Audubon Park Entrance at St. Charles courtesy of Chad Carson at Wikimedia. Early Morning Jogger courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute. Residence along Walnut Street courtesy of Expedia Tourism Media. View of Loyola from Audubon Park courtesy of R. Pascal at princeton.edu.)
3.1 District 1: St Charles/Exposition/Walnut Frontage
3.2 **District 2: Magazine Street Corridor**

District 2 lies between Audubon Zoo and Golf Course in the zone along the Magazine Street corridor. Key features in this area include:

- Newman Bandstand, terrace and gardens
- North Oak Allee
- Hyams Fountain Gardens
- Audubon Zoo and Parking
- Shelter 13
- The Tree of Life
- Whitney Young Pool
- Cascade Riding Stables
- Audubon Tennis Courts

Many visit District 2 by driving on the often busy Magazine Street. Audubon Zoo, which attracts 800,000 annual visitors, is adjacent to this district as is Audubon Park’s general parking area. Some enjoy evening strolls near Hyams Fountain while joggers continue through this area on various paths, occasionally intersecting with horseback riders. Discussions at the Master Plan Community Meetings surrounding District 2 had to do primarily with Magazine Street. Community members and park visitors have concerns with the pedestrian crossing conditions along Magazine Street and the heavy flow of traffic during busy days at the Park. Conversations focused around the difficulties of having a busy street bisect the Park. Some areas of concern include:

- Drainage along Magazine Street
- Slowing traffic along Magazine Street
- Decisions and discussions surrounding Shelter 13
- Concerns about construction along Magazine Street
- Pedestrian and bike crossings

For many, District 2 is their major access to, from and through the Park, and they expressed a strong desire to have this area maintained and enhanced as a component of the Master Plan.
3.2 District 2: Magazine Street Corridor
3.3 District 3: Riverview

District 3 contains some of the most unique experiences that Audubon Park and New Orleans can offer. The open ball fields are packed with children playing soccer on Saturday mornings. On any given sunny afternoon, one can see students and visitors gathered at the Riverview with blankets, snacks, dogs, family, and friends enjoying the sun and the cool breeze flowing up from the Mississippi River. Some cast fishing lines from the riverside boardwalk. Riverview provides an unusual opportunity in New Orleans to access the Mississippi River from inside the levee, and this area of the Park is frequently visited by those wishing to experience the scale and power of this magnificent natural waterway. Popular features of this district include:

- Baseball fields and grandstands
- Open soccer fields
- Shelters, “Stage for Viewing” Pavilion, and Restrooms
- Boardwalk along the River’s edge
- Tennis courts

Popularity of the District 3 amenities has stressed the capacity of its existing infrastructure, causing frustration among visitors and community members. Some challenges for District 3 include:

- Finding the balance between open and programmed space
- Improving traffic
- Elimination of parking on tree roots
- Protection and management of tree species
- Lighting, safety and access
- Environmental stewardship and waste management
- Providing better pedestrian and bike access

Community members interacting with the Audubon Master Plan website stated about the Riverview area, “Love the open area at the Fly. Good weather in New Orleans means a packed Fly on weekends with picnicking and families and sunbathing and crawfish boils. Perfect place to escape the city.”

[Top image courtesy of Michael Mantese. All other images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]

3.0 FOCUS AREAS
3.3 District 3: Riverview
3.4 Overlay 1: Education & Outreach

Audubon Nature Institute seeks to celebrate the wonders of nature through a familial network of parks and museums that are dedicated to nature. One of the organizing principles for Audubon Nature Institute and for the Master Plan has been to focus on education and culture. This principle engages in fostering opportunities for education and community outreach throughout the Park and celebrates the cultural heritage and unique history of Audubon Park.

The Park is used by high school and middle school groups and by university students at Loyola and Tulane for various courses and events ranging from Ecology classes to Freshman orientation groups. Professors and teachers present at community meetings during the planning process encouraged the planning team to consider the importance of the Park as an educational tool. Riverview provides a powerful opportunity to teach about the Mississippi River and to explain its significance to our country. The Park contains a rich biodiversity that can act as a living laboratory for students to learn about environmental, ecological and horticultural subjects.

Discussions from the community meetings included some of the following topics:

- Protecting the environment through systematic operations, i.e. using sustainable products and implementing initiatives to improve the environment.
- Informing the general public about trees and why vehicles should not park within the dripline.
- Signage and interpretive graphics to inform the public about Audubon Park’s history.
- Protection of natural amenities and biodiversity.
- Potential environmental educational programs such as gardening and bird watching.

[All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
3.5 Overlay 2: Traffic, Access, & Safety

Concerns about traffic, access and safety were prevalent at all the community meetings during the planning process. There are many modes of travel to and through the Park often intersecting and sometimes in conflict. These include:

- Vehicles
- Bicycles / skating
- Walking / jogging / cross training
- Access for mobility impaired
- Public transportation
- Railroad freight
- Equestrian

Each mode of travel has potential conflicts at points within the Park, especially on busy days or during popular events. Security and safety can also be a concern with regard to vehicle traffic: many community members indicated areas in which vehicles have entered the walking/jogging path unknowingly and thus endangering visitors along the path. Areas of concern and discussion in the traffic, access and safety overlay include:

- Improving bike connections and access throughout the Park including the addition of bike racks and lighting
- Improving lighting along walking/jogging path.
- Improving pedestrian crossings at Magazine Street and at Riverview entrances near railroad tracks
- Maintaining edge vegetation around the Park to promote “eyes on the street” during off-hours
- Calming traffic at Riverview and Magazine Street

[All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN
BUILDING ON SUCCESSES

4.0
4.1 Land Use Balance

Balance of uses has emerged as the focal point of the Master Plan developmental process based on public input and community dialog. Balance is not a recent concern. It has been a critical issue for the evolution of the planning of Audubon Park stemming from 19th Century debates between the Victorians, who preferred passive uses of green space, and the Progressives, who advocated for greater emphasis on recreation and athletic activities.

Throughout the Park’s history, Audubon Commission has worked diligently to address the community’s diverse voices and priorities, striving to create a vibrant public place where users of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can find unique ways to enjoy the Park. Looking to the future, Audubon Commission remains steadfast in its commitment to maintain the equilibrium between passive and active public green space.

The Master Plan recommends the following regarding balance of active and passive activities:

The current balance of active, programmed space and passive, open space is appropriate as it currently exists. There should be no expansion of programmed space at Audubon Park during this Master Plan period without additional public input.
4.1 Land Use Balance

The land use diagram above shows the different areas of use at Audubon Park. This diagram was produced from a base map drawn in AutoCAD provided by Audubon Nature Institute. Area measurements were determined by overlaying closed AutoCAD polylines on elements in the base map and querying the software for the area values.

[Land Use Diagram and images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Zoo</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Course</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stables &amp; Pool</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Fields</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Public Parking</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Parking</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking / Open Area</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2 Roads</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3 Roads</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Rec / Soccer Fields</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 1 Open Areas</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2 Open Areas</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3 Open Areas</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Belt Railroad</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Park</strong></td>
<td>320.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1 Land Use Balance

The land use diagram above combines activities into four categories including: Open Space, Programmed Open Space, Public Parking, and Programmed Activities.

[Land Use Diagram and images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Space/Lagoon</td>
<td>134.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmed Open Space</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Parking/R.O.W.</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmed Activities</td>
<td>153.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Park</strong></td>
<td><strong>320.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.0 BUILDING ON SUCCESSES

AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN | JUNE 2018

Eskew+Dumez+Ripple ARCHITECTURE INTERIOR ENVIRONMENTS URBAN STRATEGIES
4.1 Land Use Balance

The pie chart above indicates how much of the Park is currently allotted to each of the four use categories. The diagram on the right shows the spectrum of uses throughout Audubon Park and how these blend together and balance one another.

[Land Use Diagram and images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
4.2 Lighting Implementation

User surveys and public comments suggest that maintaining and adding to outdoor lighting in the Park is a primary concern. Designated hours of operation currently are 5:00 am until 10:00 pm, meaning that significant periods of use are during nighttime. Adequate lighting is necessary for safe and secure use. However, this must be balanced against concerns about light trespass, urban light pollution and impacts lighting has on the natural landscape.

The Master Plan proposes a low-impact, environmentally responsive approach to outdoor lighting including the following components:

- Consider upgrading lighting at jogging path with low-level path lights and indirect landscape lighting
- Repair and relamp lighting fixtures at Riverview boardwalk
- Consider extending uplighting of trees along St Charles to Walnut and Exposition
- Request that Department of Public Works provide full cut-off lighting fixtures along Magazine
- Study lighting at Zoo parking for efficiencies and improved security
- Coordinate with Security Department to identify existing problem areas to consider additional lighting
- Consider adopting a policy of compliance with the principles of the International Dark Sky Association.

This map shows areas of concern and need for lighting adjustments and implementation. These areas include the Riverview, Magazine Street, Audubon Park's jogging path, and extending lighting along St. Charles Avenue.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating areas of lighting concerns. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
4.3 Security Strategies

Audubon Park has a managed security program in place including 24-hour patrols and strategically positioned call-boxes. The jogging path doubles as a service drive that permits patrol vehicles to circulate deep into the Park. The diagram in this section shows points of entry along the path. Though necessary for access, these are sometimes mistaken for throughways by drivers unfamiliar with the Park. The diagram also shows a location in the Riverview district that has been identified as a potential risk area.

The Master Plan proposes the following measures to improve security.

- **Technology**: Consider additional call-boxes and a monitored camera system
- **People**: Conduct analysis of optimal staffing levels for security personnel presence throughout the Park
- **Landscape**: Increase landscape maintenance and hedge repair in selected areas

[Clockwise from Left: Image of existing security poles at Audubon Park courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple. Image of a jogger at Audubon Park courtesy of the Audubon Nature Institute. Residence along Walnut Street courtesy of Expedia Tourism Media.]
4.3 Security Strategies

The map above indicates areas of security concern addressed at several community meetings. The areas highlighted in red indicate concern around vehicles entering the jogging path. The area highlighted in yellow indicates safety concerns at the Riverview area of the Park.

[ Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating areas of safety concerns. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple. ]
4.4 Recreation Use Programming

In the blend of recreational uses, Audubon Park includes several structured facilities.

- **Baseball Fields**
  The Park contains seven baseball/softball diamonds, currently programmed for league play by boys and girls aged 4-16. Six are located in the Riverview Athletic Complex, including viewing stands and support facilities. One of these, Miracle League Field, is uniquely designed and surfaced for use by special needs children. The seventh field, Avenger Field, is adjacent to the Tennis Complex.

- **Team Sports**
  The Riverview Athletic Complex contains a six-acre open grassy area designated as play fields for children under 13 years for organized and supervised soccer, flag football, and lacrosse games.

- **Tennis Complex**
  Near the intersection of Tchoupitoulas Street and East Drive, the Tennis Complex includes ten clay surface courts and support facilities. The courts are open to the public by reservation and are used by middle school and high school teams and Audubon Tennis Club members in addition to the general public. There is an education program providing tennis lessons for all ages. Refer to page 44 for additional information.

- **Children’s Playgrounds**
  The Park contains three structured playground areas including interactive equipment and manufactured safety surfacing. These are located adjacent to Shelters 11 and 12 and within the Riverview Athletic Complex. (Continued on page 44)
Highlighted in yellow are areas of programmed recreation. These areas include playgrounds, horse stables, a swimming pool, baseball fields, soccer fields, and tennis courts.

[Diagrammatic map courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
4.4 Recreation Use Programming (Continued)

- Jogging/Cycling Path and Fitness Stations
  The paved service drive in District One is striped for use by cyclists, rollerbladers, casual walkers, and competitive runners. Along the 1.8 mile loop there are five fitness stations equipped for cross training.

- Swimming Complex
  The Whitney M. Young pool, operated and maintained by New Orleans Recreation Department, is open to children and adults during summer months.

- Equestrian Center
  Cascade Stables, operated by a private contractor, was reconstructed in 2006 and offers instruction, boarding, and recreational exercise facilities.

- Audubon Park Golf Course
  Continuing a tradition more than 120 years old, the public Golf Course occupies a central place in the Park. The course was modernized in 2002.

The Master Plan proposes no expansion or reduction of programmed recreational facilities. Because of the success and popularity of these uses, the Master Plan recommends prioritizing funding to support ongoing maintenance and facility repairs.

The Audubon Park Tennis Courts are a popular programmed attraction in the Park for local and regional players and students learning the sport. The facility has 10 courts that are widely used throughout the year and at various times of day at Audubon Park.

In meetings with the Audubon Tennis Club and other advocates, several areas for improvement were suggested:

- Addressing fence damage and problem areas
- Resurfacing of the courts and continued maintenance
- Safety of tennis players during baseball games
- Modernization of restrooms and clubhouse
- Investigate lighting of the courts for night time play

The Audubon Park Tennis Courts have an area of formal, paved parking as well as an informal gravel parking lot shared with Avenger Field. To support the surplus of visitors, there is an opportunity for reconfiguration of the existing gravel lot to accommodate more spaces while still being mindful of existing trees and green space. Any potential change to the tennis courts and surrounding area would need to be evaluated and discussed in public meetings to gather input and finalize decisions.

[All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
4.4 Recreation Use Programming - Bike Rack Locations

Highlighted in green are areas showing existing bike rack locations at Audubon Park. Areas highlighted in yellow indicate potential areas for future bike racks at Audubon Park.

[Diagrammatic map courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
4.5 Tree Management

Majestic trees have long been a part of the image of Audubon Park—and continue to be a top priority for users. Protecting the trees is identified as one of the most important items during community meetings. The Park already has an extensive tree-management system in place, yet there were some areas of concern expressed during the Master Plan process.

Audubon Park has an extensive database of existing trees in the Park, and that information continues to be a valuable resource for tree management. Current tree protection measures include lightning protection, termite applications, mulching and deep root fertilizer injections. Termites persist as a major issue, especially for willows, river birch, and other softwood species within the Park. Treatments for termites continue on a regular basis. Species that do well within the Park—and are more resistant to disease and pests—include Live Oak, Sweetgum, Red Oaks, Chestnut Oaks, Willow Oaks, Bald Cypress, Tupelo Gum, Shortleaf Pines, Longleaf Pines, Catalpa, and Southern Magnolias, among others.

Areas of concern center around the parking of vehicles on the tree roots, especially in the Riverview area and the zoo overflow parking area. Parking on tree roots has shown to shorten the lifespan of trees due to compaction, which leads to a lack of oxygen, water and nutrients available for the tree roots in the soil. Recommendations for preventing damage to the trees from vehicles include:

Barrier Planted Areas
Increasing the planted areas around the base of the trees will prevent cars from using these areas for parking. This approach retains a more integrated feel with the rest of the landscape. However, it requires more maintenance and the establishment period must be carefully monitored.

Use of Bollards
Bollards or other physical barriers such as landscape boulders can be used to prevent cars from parking on the tree roots. These physical barriers offer a high level of flexibility and are very low maintenance once installed. However, they are often more utilitarian and can detract from the visual appeal of the Park.

Curbs
Using standard roadway curbs, especially along the drive in the Riverview area, is another alternative to keep cars in designated parking spots. Much of the driving lane in that area does not have a standard roadway curb, and the edge of the pavement bleeds into the landscape. Construction of the curbing would need to be closely monitored to prevent damage to the tree roots.

Another suggestion for tree management—beyond the specific issue of damage from vehicles—includes increasing public awareness of the tree management priorities. Suggestions from the staff included more signage in the Park to communicate the history of the various trees in the Park, including the age of some of the oldest trees. Internally, better communication of the value of the trees to the staff, and proper protection protocols for setting up events, storage and general operations around the trees would be beneficial.
4.5 Tree Management

The map above outlines in green Audubon Park’s tree canopy. Naturally, most of the Park is covered in the tree canopy. Tree protection is an important element of the Master Plan and continued to be important at several community meetings.
4.5 Tree Management

Plan and Section at Magazine St.

- **Audubon Zoo Parking Lot**
- **Proposed Planting Bed**
- **Proposed Wooden Bollards**
- **Existing Live Oak Trees**
- **Proposed Wooden Bollards to Protect Tree Roots**
- **Proposed 8” Curb**

4.0 Building on Successes
4.5 Tree Management

Plan and Section at Riverview

EXISTING LIVE OAK TREES

PROPOSED WOODEN BOLLARDS

EXISTING DRIVE

PROPOSED WOODEN BOLLARDS TO PROTECT TREE ROOTS

EXISTING BUILDING ON SUCCESSES
5.1 Magazine Street

The location of Magazine Street presents long-term and short-term challenges for Audubon Park users. Along with St Charles Avenue, Magazine Street is a primary circulation arterial for visitors arriving by automobile or public transit, affording easy access and clear orientation for regional users and tourists. However, the busy street bisects the Park and impacts pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the Park boundaries. The growth and development of the upper Magazine and Tchoupitoulas commercial corridors combined with the nearby presence of Children’s Hospital and the Clarence Henry Truckway serving the Port of New Orleans have escalated traffic density on Magazine Street dramatically in recent years. Pedestrian crossing points are poorly marked and positioned in conflict with auto traffic patterns. User input through surveys and public comment suggests that improving safe passage in this area is a major concern for Park visitors.

The City of New Orleans Department of Public Works is administering a capital improvement program involving local and Federal funding that includes full-depth reconstruction of the roadway and sidewalks and replacement of sub-surface drainage for the stretch of Magazine Street that runs through the Park. The project is scheduled to begin construction in 2019 for a duration of one year. During that period access and circulation within the Park will be affected.

The Master Plan identifies three nodes along Magazine Street that are critical to improving safety and mobility and includes diagrams of proposed solutions.

[Right: Images of trees at Audubon Park. All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
5.1 Magazine Street

Magazine Street - Field Identified Deficiencies

- Bicycle and pedestrian crossings of Magazine Street occur haphazardly and no direction is provided to guide users to specific or protected locations.
- The existing walking path on the northwest side of the golf course directs bicyclists and pedestrians at the #1 West Intersection (Magazine Street at Bus Terminus) into an intersection with an excessive number of conflict points.
- Sight distance is limited for motorists exiting #1 West Intersection (Magazine Street at Bus Terminus) due to the curvature of the roadway and utility poles between the sidewalk and the median.
- Parking along Magazine limits the roadway to a single lane and therefore left turning vehicles into the Zoo and Riverview block traffic causing congestion and queuing on Magazine.
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at Bus Terminus

As a traffic consultant to the Master Plan, Urban Systems Inc has provided insight throughout the planning process highlighting existing traffic conditions and potential improvement areas at Audubon Park. Their report indicates several conflict points for pedestrians along Magazine Street as well as instances that create congested traffic flow.

Magazine Street Intersection #1 is given a B LOS rating (see chart on page #56) on Magazine Street traveling west and an F LOS rating at Riverview Drive traveling north. The Master Plan’s proposal for this intersection is one possible solution for this area. The dark arrows shown on the traffic diagram on the following page indicates proposed traffic flow. The green path indicates areas for pedestrian and cyclists and the grey path indicates vehicular roadways. The proposed change focuses on:

- Providing a safer path for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Magazine Street near the existing walking / jogging / biking path.
- Allowing more space for vehicles to queue to turn left or right onto Magazine Street from Riverview Drive.
- The potential addition of a left turn lane into the Audubon Zoo entrance from Magazine Drive.

With these goals in mind, the intersection at Magazine Street and Riverview Drive could begin to implement some of these changes to help alleviate traffic in that area and to enhance pedestrian safety. This is one potential solution to this area and public feedback would be necessary to move forward with any permanent decisions and design implementation.

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES

[Clockwise from top: Image of Audubon Bus turnaround on Magazine Street courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple. Three Images of Speed Table Crosswalks courtesy of the National Association of City Transportation Officials at nacto.org.]
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at Bus Terminus

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at Zoo & Golf Course Entrances

Magazine Street Intersection #2 occurs at the intersection of Magazine Street and the Audubon Golf and Zoo parking entrances. This intersection is given an A LOS rating on Magazine Street traveling west and a D LOS rating exiting Zoo Drive onto Magazine Street. The dark arrows shown on the traffic diagram on the following page indicates proposed traffic flow. The green path indicates areas for pedestrian and cyclists and the grey path indicates vehicular roadways.

In areas requiring a new pedestrian crossing at Magazine Street, the Master Plan proposes the potential inclusion of elevated table crossings. These crossings elevate the entire crossing area as an elongated speed bump, allowing for the crossing pedestrian / cyclist to be raised of the street slight aiding visibility from vehicles on Magazine Street.

Tables 1 presents the Level of Service criteria for unsignalized intersections. (The entire traffic report can be found in the Master Plan Appendix.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Service</th>
<th>Control Delay (sec/veh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≤ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&gt; 10 and ≤ 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&gt; 15 and ≤ 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&gt; 25 and ≤ 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>&gt; 35 and ≤ 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The existing conditions capacity analyses were based on the existing intersection geometry and traffic control. A summary of the existing LOS and delay conditions is presented in Table 2. Analysis results are included in the Appendix.

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES

[Overall diagram of Magazine Street. Intersection 2 highlights the area near the Zoo and Golf Entrances along Magazine Street.]
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at Zoo & Golf Course Entrances

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES

CONTINUE PEDESTRIAN PATH TO ZOO ENTRANCE

NEW PEDESTRIAN PATH CONNECTION

CREATE NEW LEFT TURN LANE

NEW CROSSWALK

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at East Drive

Magazine Street Intersection #3 occurs at the intersection of Magazine Street and East Drive. This intersection receives an F LOS rating exiting East Drive onto Magazine Street. The dark arrows shown on the traffic diagram on the following page indicates proposed traffic flow. The green path indicates areas for pedestrian and cyclists and the grey path indicates vehicular roadways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersection/Approach</th>
<th>Tuesday PM</th>
<th>Saturday peak hr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOS</td>
<td>Delay (s/veh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Dr at Magazine St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine St Westbound</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Dr Northbound</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo Dr at Magazine St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine St Westbound</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo Dr Northbound</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Room Dr at Magazine St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine St Westbound</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Room Dr Northbound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Dr at Magazine St</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>210.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of Table 2 indicates that the results are consistent with the field observations on the side streets. Unsignalized analysis does not estimate delays on the uncontrolled mainline (Magazine) where it should be free-flow. Field observations indicate congestion during these hours, specifically contributed to left turning vehicles and parking maneuvers. (The entire traffic report can be found in the Master Plan Appendix.)

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.1 Magazine Street Intersection at East Drive

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES

- NEW PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK
- NEW BIKE & WALKING PATH
- ELIMINATE RIGHT TURN LANE
- REVERSE THE VEHICLE DIRECTION “ONE WAY IN”
- CREATE NEW LEFT TURN LANE
- RELOCATE BIKE & WALKING PATH
5.2 Riverview Circulation

More than any other part of the Park, the Riverview district incorporates a wide diversity of uses and constituencies. Often there are multiple, large group functions such as team sports and family picnics occurring simultaneously. Currently, access to this part of the Park is restricted to gated single points of entry and exit. The confluence of automobiles, foot traffic, cyclists, and the occasional railroad train, all competing for the right-of-way, impedes mobility and sometimes causes unsafe conditions.

Based on observation and analysis, the Master Plan proposes modifications to clarify pedestrian/bicycle circulation patterns and separate them from auto traffic. Improved accessibility will promote more foot traffic and help lessen the congestion that now prevails. Park operations may help by encouraging users to park remotely and walk or bike to the Riverview using the proposed system of pathways instead of driving. Rerouting the drives is intended to lessen the bottleneck effect of the current singular entrance/exit configuration and relieve the car stacking that occurs at Magazine Street. The following diagrams depict the proposed solutions.

Any implementation will require additional public input and professional analysis to determine the best solution.
5.2 Riverview Circulation

Riverview - Field-Identified Deficiencies

- The existing one-way roadway network requires all users to travel the entire distance (1.53 miles).
- The sidewalk and bike path network does not extend over the railroad tracks requiring bicyclists and pedestrians to walk in the vehicular roadway.
- The shared use path that runs along the river/railroad tracks Leake Avenue ends at Riverview Drive.
- Soccer Field Drive is one-way, but signage is not provided indicating it is the only entrance therefore motorists that have missed it drive the wrong way to access parking areas.
- One-way traffic on a street wider than needed promotes speeding.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians on East Drive between the railroad tracks and Magazine Street must either use the vehicular roadway and/or an informal trail through the grassy tree area.
- During peak times, gaps do not exist in the Magazine Street traffic to allow left exits from #3 East intersection (Magazine Street at East Drive)
5.2 Riverview Intersection at Riverview Entry

Intersection #1 at the Riverview entry is the current, one-way entrance to the Riverview area at Audubon Park. This intersection accommodates vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist traffic on a daily basis often overlapping these modes of travel on busy days. The Master Plan proposes the conversion of Riverview Drive into a two-way road for its entire length without the addition of any additional paving to the roadway.

Minor and major modifications for the area include:

- Convert Roadway into two-way traffic flow
- Include designated bike and pedestrian crossings, connecting to the Mississippi River trail
- Improve surface on the levee walk

Modifications will require additional study and public input prior to implementation.

Potential Minor Modifications (Throughout Audubon Park. The entire traffic report can be found in the Master Plan Appendix.)

The following minor modifications were identified that could provide improvements that may or may not require additional study.

1. Pave the small levee/berm along the zoo side of the soccer fields between Riverview and East Drives.
   a. This should be connected to the shared use/bike path along the river/railroad tracks/Leake Avenue
   b. This could be in conjunction with restriping the pavement across the Riverview Drive railroad crossing for a single vehicular (existing one-way configuration)

2. Install striped pedestrian crossings on Magazine Street at the intersections with advance warning signage, pushbutton activated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, stamped colored pavement and/or a raised pedestrian crossing/speed tables as shown on the diagram in section 5.1.

3. Widen pavement along the west side of East Drive beginning at Magazine Street to provide additional storage and access to the right turn lane when left turning vehicles queue

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.2 Riverview Intersection at Riverview Entry

- NEW CROSSWALK
- MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL
- NEW BIKE & WALK PATH TO MAGAZINE STREET
- IMPROVE SURFACE ON “LEVEE WALK”
- NEW BIKE & WALK PATH TO MAGAZINE STREET
- NEW CROSSWALKS
- ZOO SECURITY GATE
- ACCESS TO EXISTING SIDEWALK FROM PARKING

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.2 Riverview Intersection at East Drive

Riverview intersection #2 at East Drive is the current, one-way exit from the Riverview area at Audubon Park. Similar to the entrance intersection #1, this intersection accommodates vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist traffic on a daily basis. The Master Plan proposes the conversion of Riverview Drive into a two-way road for its entire length without the addition of any additional paving to the roadway.

Potential Major Modifications (Throughout Audubon Park. The entire traffic report can be found in the Master Plan Appendix.)

The following potential improvements were identified with associated requirements, pros, cons and/or additional considerations. Further traffic analysis and geometric design may be required for implementation.

1. Convert the roadway network around the Riverview to two-way for its entire length from the main parking lot at the Riverview gate to the #3 East Intersection (Magazine Street at East Drive).
   a. The installation of new gates at both railroad crossings would be required for exiting traffic.
   b. Additional pavement at the both railroad crossings and Riverview gates may be required to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
   c. Two-way traffic will result in traffic calming/reductions in vehicular speeds.
   d. Travel distances for all users should reduce with access from both sides in lieu of every vehicle traversing the entire distance.
   e. Travel distances within the surrounding neighborhoods should reduce.
   f. Traffic volumes on Riverview Drive should reduce significantly and consideration could be given to removing that section of roadway and restoring it to greenspace.

2. Convert the Riverview Drive and Soccer Drive to two-way.
   a. The installation of a new gate for exiting traffic at the Riverview Drive railroad crossing and Riverview gate would be required.
   b. Additional pavement at the East Drive railroad crossing and Riverview gate may be required to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
   c. Two-direction traffic will result in traffic calming reductions in vehicular speeds.
   d. Travel distances should reduce for some users.
   e. Travel distances within the surrounding neighborhoods should reduce.
   f. Traffic volumes on East Drive should reduce significantly.
5.2 Riverview Intersection at East Drive

- NEW BIKE AND WALKING PATH
- CONNECT TO EXISTING WALK
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT RAILROAD
- ORGANIZE PARKING MORE EFFICIENTLY

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.2 Riverview Intersection at East Drive & Tchoupitoulas

Riverview intersection #3 at East Drive locates the bus turn-around at Tchoupitoulas near the tennis courts and continues the one-way exit at East drive out the Magazine Street. Similar to the entrance intersection #1 and #2, this intersection accommodates vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist traffic on a daily basis. At Intersection #3, the Master Plan proposes the reversal of East Drive to provide a one-way entrance condition into the Park at the Riverview area. Riverview Drive will continue its proposed two-way condition to a potential roundabout at Tchoupitoulas allowing visitors to exit and enter Riverview from Tchoupitoulas instead of Magazine Street.

Potential Major Modifications Continued (Throughout Audubon Park. The entire traffic report can be found in the Master Plan Appendix.)

The following potential improvements were identified with associated requirements, pros, cons and/or additional considerations. Further traffic analysis and geometric design may be required for implementation.

3. Convert East Drive to one-way away from Magazine Street to Tchoupitoulas Street and convert East Drive to two-way from Riverview/Soccer Drives with a required right turn exit onto Tchoupitoulas Street.
   a. The installation of a new gate for exiting traffic at the East Drive railroad crossing would be required
   b. Additional pavement at the East Drive railroad crossing may be required to accommodate bicyclists and/or pedestrians
   c. The pavement along East Drive between Magazine Street and Tchoupitoulas street could be re-striped to provide bike lanes and/or a shared use path
   d. Travel distances for some users should reduce
   e. Travel distances within the surrounding neighborhoods should reduce
   f. Parking on Tchoupitoulas may need to be restricted to the residential side between Exposition Boulevard and Henry Clay Avenue

4. Convert the #1 West Intersection to an entrance only allowing left turns from Magazine and make modifications including wayfinding signage within the main parking lot to require left turn exits take place at the main Zoo entrance/exit intersection.
   a. Median modifications on Magazine may be required in addition to signage for wayfinding and turn restrictions
   b. A paved shared use path could be provided from Magazine Street to the Riverview Drive railroad crossing separate from the parking field.

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.2 Riverview Intersection at East Drive & Tchoupitoulas

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

The Master Plan acknowledges changing attitudes and holistic approaches to dealing with stormwater and drainage in a sustainable, resilient way. In the section entitled Looking to the Future there is a methodology described for implementing a comprehensive water management plan for the entire Park that is beyond the scope of this Plan. The intent of this section is to identify areas within the Park where inadequate drainage materially affects Park users and adjoining property owners. Included are diagrams to depict proposed interim solutions using low-cost, low-impact interventions.

Historically, Audubon Park, like most urban parks, exists partly for its ability to retain a large volume of runoff from surrounding neighboring properties. Analysis of best practices suggests that standing water that dissipates within 72 hours of a rainstorm presents no significant health or ecological problems. The existing lagoons within the golf course, totaling more than 20 acres of surface area, act as retention ponds, but their efficiency can be increased. The Master Plan recommends improvements to the lagoons.

- Dredging and removal of silt and algae
- Stabilization and erosion-prevention at shoreline
- Aeration and water quality management
- Grading and sub-surface piping to redirect stormwater

The Audubon Nature Institute Facilities Department staff has an ongoing program for investigating the condition and location of existing underground drainage and maintaining and improving it. The Master Plan recommends increased support of this program. Likewise, the Master Plan recommends coordinating with Public Works on the Magazine improvements and the Public Belt Railroad to help with problem areas within the rights-of-way.
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

The map above indicates areas of interest and concern regarding water drainage and pooling of water throughout the Park. Water management remained an important element throughout many master plan community meetings.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating drainage problem areas at Audubon Park. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

Improving Drainage Flow: Option 1

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES

- Flood Area
- Existing Pedestrian and Bike Path
- Distributes Flood Water to Lagoon
- Underdrain
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

Improving Drainage Flow: Option 2

- Stormwater storage
- Pedestrian and bike path
- Locally flooding flows into underground storage
- Slowly released into existing storm sewer

5.0 Addressing Existing Challenges
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

Improving Drainage Flow: Option 3

- **OVERFLOWS WATER TO LAGOON DURING HEAVY RAINSTORM**
- **DISTRIBUTES FLOOD WATER TO LAGOON**
- **RAISED PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE PATH**
- **UNDERDRAIN**

5.0 ADDRESSING EXISTING CHALLENGES
5.3 Interim Drainage Strategies

Improving Drainage Flow: Option 4

- **Existing PeDESTrian and Bike Path**
- **Flooding Area**
- **Underdrain**
- **Distributes Flood Water to Existing Drainage System**

**Addressing Existing Challenges**
5.4 Existing Architectural Features

The Park contains several structures that date from various eras in its development. Many of these are utilitarian, but several have historic and nostalgic importance. Prioritizing resources for maintaining and preserving existing structures becomes increasingly more challenging as time passes.

Within the Park, Audubon Commission has invested in renovations to the following historic structures and elements:

- Newman Bandstand
- Shelter 10
- Shelter 11 and play area
- Shelter 12 and play area
- Olmsted gateway at Exposition and St Charles
- Ogden Entrance Pavilion and Gumbel Fountain along St Charles

The Master Plan recommends consideration of the following as funding priorities are established:

- Shelter 13
- Hyams Fountain
- Hurst Bridge
- Boardwalk at Riverview
- Restrooms at Riverview picnic area
- Restrooms at tennis courts
- Shoreline erosion at lagoons
- Zoo Cruise and Riverview Zoo entrance

As funding becomes available for planning and construction, the Master Plan recommends that new projects affecting land use follow the process for community input outlined in this Master Plan.

[All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
5.4 Existing Architectural Features

Shelter 13

Shelter 13 is a covered pavilion located on Magazine Street in District 2 of Audubon Park. The building, attributed to prominent architect and former Audubon Commissioner Sam Stone, Jr., was originally designed as a picnic shelter and bathrooms. It has been vacant for several years, with periodic maintenance and reroofing to stabilize the structure.

There are concerns surrounding Shelter 13’s proximity to Magazine Street, adding a layer of complexity to design solutions for reuse of the shelter. It is less than 40 feet from Magazine Street, with its original entrance facing away from Magazine towards Hyams Fountain and Audubon Zoo. Because of this close proximity to the busy street, many are concerned about safety for children during family gatherings. Community responses to the question of potential uses for Shelter 13 have been slow to materialize, but late in the planning process there was commentary on the Master Plan’s website in support of preserving it.

The Master Plan recognizes that Shelter 13 has a place in the history of the Park and recommends preserving the structure and not demolishing it. In the absence of a clear public mandate for use of the shelter, the Master Plan recommends further public engagement to discuss the shelter’s potential.

Public input about the shelter will inform a definitive decision about the future use of the facility.

5.4 Existing Architectural Features

Hurst Bridge

Hurst Bridge provides unique opportunities to encourage investigation of the bridge’s structure, exhibit the condition of the water’s edge at the lagoon, and explore the interaction of people and nature at a specific moment in the Park.

One potential design could include a destination point near the water’s edge. This could incorporate seating and interpretive signage to create a space for bird-watching, viewing the natural scenery, and raising awareness of the lagoon’s soil and water conditions. Hurst Bridge will need accessibility upgrades that would allow all visitors to use and traverse both sides of the lagoon while featuring the Bridge’s historical design characteristics. The Master Plan considers Hurst Bridge as an intermediary between natural preservation and man-made intervention.

Recommendations for Hurst Bridge include:

- Accessible upgrades to the existing bridge structure to include sloped access and guardrail
- Creation of an arrival point on the Golf Course side of the bridge
- Potential destination area near the lagoon’s edge, addressing shoreline erosion and access
- Addition of seating and restoration of light fixtures

There are many design possibilities for this element, and all future proposals for Hurst Bridge will require public input and evaluation before proceeding with a definitive design solution.

(Clockwise from top: Diagrammatic plan of the existing Hurst Street Bridge courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple. Image of existing Hurst Bridge courtesy of Audubon Nature Institute.)
AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

6.0
6.1 Comprehensive Water Management Plan

Drainage within the Park was identified as a major issue during community meetings. Audubon Park experiences major drainage challenges; localized flooding make parts of Audubon Park inaccessible after a heavy storm. New Orleans has adopted a series of citywide measures to reduce flooding and improve the infrastructure of the city. With such a large expanse of green space, Audubon Park can play a key role in the larger effort to reduce flooding, not only within the Park, but in an entire area of the city. A holistic approach to dealing with stormwater and drainage in a sustainable, resilient way should be a priority for the Park going forward.

The Master Plan recommends a comprehensive study of the drainage of the Park, with a focus on retaining more stormwater in the Park, while also reducing the flooding and standing water that is an issue for many users. These goals are not mutually exclusive, and have been achieved in other parts of the city through a careful application of green infrastructure best practices.

Recommendations for developing a comprehensive water strategy for the Park include:

- Develop a systems approach to stormwater management, looking at the entire watershed
- Build new green infrastructure systems to integrate with existing drainage system
- Identify multiple benefits that can be included in infrastructure investments
- Use a triple bottom line cost/benefit analysis to determine the most efficient drainage systems
- Create a maintenance and monitoring plan early on to ensure long-term performance of the system

6.1 Comprehensive Water Management Plan

The map above indicates areas of interest and concern regarding water drainage and pooling of water throughout the Park. Water management remained an important element throughout the community meetings. All of Audubon Park lies above sea level with the exception of the Audubon Lagoons. The original purpose of the lagoons was to provide the Park with areas for water retention during heavy rain events.

[above is a diagrammatic map of audubon park indicating drainage problem areas at audubon park. image courtesy of eskew+dumez+ripple.]
Wayfinding encompasses all ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. A well-designed wayfinding system promotes a feeling of continued care and upkeep, offers new and exciting opportunities to communicate the mission of the Park, and is a cost-effective way to instill a sense of renewal and progress in a historic park system.

At a practical level, wayfinding signage is currently found throughout the Park at both the pedestrian and vehicular scale, but signage in the outer extremities of the Park do not currently lead visitors to key attractions or neighborhoods. An upgraded wayfinding system could enhance the transportation experience for both pedestrians and motorists.

The Master Plan recommends a comprehensive wayfinding study to be conducted. Key components of a comprehensive study would include the engagement of community members to determine the ideal destinations where signage is most effective for travelers throughout Audubon Park and utilize a hierarchy of information moving from general information to specific information as travelers move from gateways of the Park and its outer limits towards the center of the Park and towards specific attractions.

The overall signage strategy should focus on gateways and decision points throughout the Park. Gateway signage may signify the arrival to the Park at St. Charles Avenue or Magazine Street. Local signage should appear different from orientation signage. Unique, consistent fonts and grammar on local signage allows for visitors to quickly orient themselves and will reflect cultural elements specific to Audubon Park.

Wayfinding should be established at multiple scales throughout the Park as the placement and amount of information differ for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. A comprehensive signage strategy will simultaneously orient both residents and visitors. Vehicular signage at the perimeter of Audubon Park must be large, easy to read at vehicular speeds, and should direct drivers towards notable destinations within the Park (parking lots, staging grounds, etc.). Pedestrian signage should designate access to public transportation nearby, and specific amenities in each area of the Park. Vehicular and pedestrian signage should always be separate for the safety of all travelers.

[Right: Images of trees at Audubon Park. All images courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
6.2 Graphics & Wayfinding Program

The map above indicates areas of interest in improving and providing connective graphics and wayfinding items. These areas include the entrance of the Park along St Charles Avenue, the walking/jogging path, Magazine Street, and the Riverview area of the Park.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating areas of wayfinding interest in the Park. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
6.3 Land Acquisition Strategies

Audubon Park occupies basically the same footprint as in the 1870’s when the land was first acquired and designated for public use. As the surrounding residential neighborhoods have developed, the Park has essentially become landlocked. Bounded by streets on three sides and the Mississippi River, opportunities for contiguous land acquisition by the Park are negligible. The exception is two parcels on the riverfront, abutting the southwest corner of the Riverview District, controlled by the Bisso family and Bisso Marine. The smaller parcel is 2.05 acres and contains a residential scaled structure. The larger parcel is 11.7 acres and extends along the Mississippi on the river side of the flood levee. This property was formerly a shipyard and still operates as a marine industrial facility. These parcels represent the best potential for the Park to acquire more acreage.

Given that the Audubon Nature Institute operates other park facilities within Orleans Parish, including the Wilderness Park and Nature Center on the West Bank, the Master Plan does not recommend pursuing land acquisitions that are disconnected from the Park.

[Top: Image of the Riverview courtesy of Michael Mantese. Right: Images of Audubon Park courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
6.3 Land Acquisition Strategies

The map above indicates strategic properties located near the open green area of the Riverview. These properties are used currently as industrial spaces.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating strategic acquisitions near Riverview. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
AUDUBON PARK MASTER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

7.0
7.1 Recommended Priorities

Establishing a balance of uses within Audubon Park among the many opportunities has emerged as the primary focus of the Master Plan. The list of recommended projects and areas of focus strives to maintain and enhance Audubon Park’s existing palette of natural and man-made amenities.

Summary of Recommendations

Building on Successes
- Maintain a balance & variety of land uses
- Improve lighting in well-used areas of the Park
- Continue to provide security during & after hours
- Maintain organized recreation facilities
- Foster stewardship of the ecology through tree management

Addressing Existing Challenges
- Magazine Street Traffic calming and pedestrian/bicycle crossings
- Riverview pedestrian circulation and traffic congestion
- Improve drainage in sensitive areas using green infrastructure
- Preserve architectural features in the Park including Hurst Bridge, Shelter 13, and Hyams Fountain

Looking to the Future
- Comprehensive Water Management Plan
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Strategic future land acquisitions

With these recommendations, the Master Plan also recognizes the importance of environmental stewardship throughout the Park and considers how this might be implemented in the future. Incentivizing non-auto use in the Park would begin to relieve many problem areas in Audubon Park – traffic, parking on tree roots, and overflow parking issues. Moving forward, the Master Plan recommends implementation of environmental stewardship and water management through green infrastructure as the top priorities for Audubon Park.
7.1 Recommended Priorities

The map above layers recommendations for Audubon Park in the Master Plan’s three areas of focus: Building on Successes, Addressing Existing Challenges, and Looking to the Future. The priorities strive to maintain and enhance the Park’s successful features, natural and man-made.

[Above is a diagrammatic map of Audubon Park indicating recommended priorities throughout the Park. Image courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
7.2 Implementation

Among funding sources, Audubon Park currently does not receive a dedicated tax millage for capital projects or operations. The Park occasionally has benefited from funding through City and State capital outlay budget allocations and competitive federal grants dedicated to specific projects. Park operations are funded by a combination of net revenues generated by Audubon Nature Institute facilities, endowed funds established for Audubon Park, and private donations. Audubon Golf Club largely operates at a break-even financial condition, supplemented by income from Club House catering events. Notably, Audubon Zoo is the only zoo in the country that is responsible for supporting the Park in which it is housed.

As Audubon Park moves forward with implementation of the Master Plan’s recommendations and strategies, the need for maintenance and demands for improvements can be expected to continue. The maintenance programs currently in place for the Park will be the primary drivers. As opportunities for improvements become available, they will be evaluated through a public process.

Audubon Nature Institute’s commitment to transparency as a responsible 501(c)3 non-profit organization supports the Master Plan’s recommendation of incorporating public engagement for future projects involving a change of use.

As funding becomes available for planning and construction, it is important that any new project that affects land use follows a process of community input through a series of public meetings and engagement opportunities similar to the process undertaken for this Master Plan.

[Images of Audubon Park courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.]
7.3 Community Engagement

The New Orleans Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (2014) and the City of New Orleans Master Plan (2010) provide valid models for a program to periodically review and revise the Audubon Park Master Plan. As individual projects obtain funding and move into the regulatory process, the Master Plan recommends following the relevant guidelines for community engagement and neighborhood participation set forth in the CZO and City Master Plan.

Moving forward, the community engagement program developed for the Audubon Park Master Plan is recommended to be adopted for future endeavors. Potential projects that would benefit from this process include Shelter 13 and the Audubon Park Tennis Courts. Notification of public meetings will be made clear to all community members available to participate in the process.

The planning process for this Master Plan has employed techniques for public input that have positively influenced the outcome. These include:

- Active engagement in mapping areas of challenge and opportunity within the Park. This engagement was performed online and in interactive workshop sessions at community meetings.
- Avenues for public commentary about the Park at public community meetings, on the dedicated project website, and through direct written contact with the planning team.
- Opportunities for participation in surveys online and in person.

It is with the community’s support that the Park will thrive and stay relevant for future generations to come.

[Image of picnickers at the Riverview courtesy of Michael Mantese. Images of Audubon Park courtesy of Eskew+Dumez+Ripple]